



How Music Changes the Way We Feel

KS3 MUSIC

KS3 SCIENCE

Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

Your Brain Loves Music

When you listen to music, something amazing happens inside your head. **Sound waves** travel through your ears and reach a special part of your brain called the **auditory cortex**. But music doesn't just make noise—it actually makes your brain release chemicals called **neurotransmitters** that affect how you feel.

The most important chemical is called **dopamine**. This is your brain's "happy chemical." When you hear music you love, your brain floods with dopamine, which makes you feel excited, joyful, or energized. This is why your favourite song can instantly lift your mood!

Speed, Volume, and Pitch Matter

Different musical qualities trigger different emotions. **Fast, upbeat music** with lots of energy tends to make us feel happy, excited, or pumped up. **Slow, gentle music** makes us feel calm, sad, or peaceful. The **volume** (how loud it is) and **pitch** (how high or low the notes are) also matter hugely.

Think of it like the difference between a thunderstorm and a soft rain. Thunder (loud and sudden) makes you jump and feel alert. Soft rain sounds (quiet and gentle) make you feel relaxed and sleepy.

Your Memories Matter Too

Here's something fascinating: the same song can make two people feel completely different emotions! This is because music is linked to **memory**. If a song reminds you of a happy birthday party, you'll feel happy when you hear it. But if it reminds someone else of a sad goodbye, they might feel sad instead.

Your brain has created **emotional associations** with music through your personal experiences. Scientists have discovered that listening to music you love actually activates **multiple areas of your brain** at once—not just the hearing part, but also the memory, emotion, and movement areas.

Music Makes Your Body React

Emotions aren't just in your head—they're physical too! When you hear exciting music, your **heart rate** might speed up, you might get goosebumps, or you might feel like dancing. Slow music can lower your heart rate and help you relax. Some studies show that listening to calming music can actually reduce **stress hormones** like cortisol.

Think of it like how a roller coaster makes your body feel thrilled and scared at the same time. Music does something similar—it sends signals that make your whole body respond to the emotions.

This is why music is so powerful. It's not just entertainment—it's a direct line to your emotions, memories, and physical body all at once!